

Technology and social media are now fixed threads in the fabric of most of our lives; there may be a few 80+ year-old folks who have yet to establish a Facebook page or an email account, but the great majority of people are at least minimally connected in the cyber world. Ever since grandparents discovered they could look at pictures of grandchildren on Facebook and actually talk to grandchildren on a computer via Face Time, social media connectivity has exploded far beyond the demographic margins of teenagers and young adults.

As with any other aspect of our culture, we need to maintain a healthy perspective and practice discipline in regards to how we use technology so that we don't find ourselves being ruled by the technology beast. For example...food is a great thing but too much food is not healthy, the wrong kinds of food can be damaging, and food has become the master if a person finds himself or herself living to eat instead of eating to live. The same can be said of music, work, pleasure, exercise, and technology.

Read the following (*which I didn't compose but do endorse*) and reflect on each point because I've noticed that it's not just teenagers that have developed a smart phone umbilical cord! Here are 6 ways to know when technology is in its proper place AND when it's not:

1) Technology is in its proper place when it helps us bond with the real people we have been given to love. *It's out of its proper place when we end up bonding with people at a distance, like celebrities, whom we will never meet.*

2) Technology is in its proper place when it generates meaningful conversations. *It's out of its proper place when it prevents us from talking with and listening to one another, or turns us into keyboard warriors who complain, criticize, pass judgment, and spread rumors..*

3) Technology is in its proper place when it helps us take care of the fragile bodies we inhabit. *It's out of its proper place when it promises to help us escape the limits and vulnerabilities of those bodies altogether.*

4) Technology is in its proper place when it helps us acquire skill and mastery of domains that are the glory of human culture (music, the arts, cooking, writing, theology, accounting; the list could go on and on). *It's out of its proper place when it replaces the development of personal skill with passive consumption - aka habitual scrolling & doom scrolling.*

5) Technology is in its proper place when it helps us cultivate awe for the created world we are part of and responsible for stewarding. *It's out of its proper place when it keeps us from going outside and engaging the wild and wonderful natural world with all our senses in the places where we actually live and can actually afford to explore.*

6) Technology is in its proper place only when we use it with care, intention, and accountability. *Technology, in and of its self, is amoral; it doesn't know its proper place on its own. It has great capacity for good but can also open pathways into some really dark and evil places. Used in a God honoring way, technology can strengthen our relationship with Jesus; if used to participate in secret sin, it will slowly draw us away from intimacy with Jesus. Either we govern our use of technology or we will fall prey to the technology beast.*

Grace & peace, love you! PK

